Project Initiation Document   Draft v0.2 5th January 2016

Project Name	New Visit Ely Website	Programme	Transformation	
Project Manager	Tracey Harding	Project Executive	Richard Quayle	

Purpose: To seek approval to proceed with the delivery of this project.

Background

Ely's Tourist Information Centre is a public service that promotes the City as a destination of choice to both national and international interests. Its website presence through visitely.org.uk and olivercromwellhouse.co.uk are required to fulfil various important functions and these include:

- Promotion of the city and surrounding area.
- Visitor Information (TIC)
- Accommodation Listing
- Attractions Listing
- Eating Guide
- Events Listings
- Shopping and Markets
- Travel and Transport
- Group Visits
- Leisure and Riverside
- Cycle and Walks
- Oliver Cromwell's House

East Cambridgeshire District Council manages the Visit Ely website (www.visitely.org.uk) as a sub-domain of the Council's main website.

The current site attracts 220,000 hits per year and lists well on various search engines and against target key words, for example '*visit ely*' taking the top five rankings on Google.

The pages are now considered to look very dated, lacking in modern design methodology and are inconsistent with the progression of other more recent marketing materials used by the tourism team. The compromised layout and extensive copy adds to poor navigability.

In addition, the tourism team has limited ability to regularly update the website themselves which means that there are limitations on how quickly pages and content can be refreshed.

Most commentators agree that the site is a constraining factor as it seeks to expand its remit with further commercialisation and high profile place marketing given as a priority.

To that end expert advice has been sought from external website deigners to consider improvement of the aesthetic appeal, functionality and layout of the website. Feedback supports our case that the existing website is weak and does not serve Ely as a desitnation nor in day to day use by the team.

The main purpose of the project is to simply replace the existing with a new and fit for purpose 'Visit Ely' website that addresses the above issues. The second project's pupose is to create a new revenue opportunity which is not possible with the current website.

Business Case

The Tourism and Town Centres Service falls within the remit of the Council's Commercial Services and the development of a new website will provide a new source of income which will contribute in reducing the net cost of the service. This new commercial initiative also addresses one of the Council's Corporate priorities to provide: A customer driven efficient Council with a "can do" attitude and pro business approach and commercially focused to ensure financial self sufficiency for the taxpayer.

The key benefits of this project are:

- To raise the profile of Ely and the district by providing an improved on-line presence which interacts with social media (a currently predominantly untapped area)

- To contribute to an increase in economic growth and visitor numbers

- To meet visitors expectations and provide a vastly improved service to users

- To provide businesses with an enhanced promotional platform opportunity

- To maximise income opportunities which meets with the Council's Commercial and Corporate Plan agendas.

Project Objectives and Scope

Project Objectives

The objectives for this project are to provide:

- A clear, simple to navigate, well-designed website, representing attention to detail, professionalism and quality

- A commercial website that will bring in new income to the tourism service

- Opportunity to highlight key visitor/content areas (including our own visitor attraction, service and events) to maximise exposure as well as income opportunities

- A 'responsive' design theme that adapts to the resolution available on the desktop, tablet or mobile phone

- A site structured to enable clear visibility to search engine spiders

- A site with uncomplicated functionality that provides the necessary foundations both in terms of design and technology to facilitate future enhancements

- A Content Management System (CMS) facility to manage each section of the site, including the addition of further sections and pages, enabling site administrators (TIC Staff) to retain full responsibility for updating and adding content, but without the need for any significant technical knowledge

- A site with links to popular social networking websites

- To provide sufficient 'wow factor' when visiting to fully attract, engage and retain the audience

- Have a more dynamic search options for ease of use

- The option to create an online shop front - allowing the secure purchase of gifts, advanced tickets or other services/items using credit card or PayPal

- Create a web presence that will measurably increase traffic with objective of 300,000 hits by 2016/17 and 500,000 hits by 2017/18

A specification document has been drafted and initial estimations show that a new website could be achieved for as little as £5,000. At this low cost a new commercial website could be funded by our in-house tourism budget. However, we would anticipate that this outlay could be recouped within twelve months of operation through income received from advertising from our key tourism partners. We then have further income opportunities by attracting new advertisers as well as selling banner advertising space (a new commercial venture).

In addition, to the initial set-up cost, there would also be annual hosting/support costs which we currently have within our tourism budget as this money currently pays for a third party accommodation search which will cease once the new website is up and running.

An Equality Impact Assessment and in-depth Risk Assessment will be incorporated as part of the final specification document.

Project Scope

The proposed new website will no longer be integrated into the Council's website (www.eastcambs.gov.uk). It would be a standalone website hosted and maintained by the awarded company. The website will be updated by the tourism team and therefore will no longer require support via the Service Desk or web team. This change in practice has been successful trialled by the new website launched by the Economic Development Team. Whilst some of the current tourism team will be trained in basic updating the new recruitment of a Marketing Support Officer will be instrumental in ensuring that the new website is constantly refreshed and updated (this is a revised position of a current vacant post and therefore budget is in place).

Project Deliverables

The main deliverable of this project is to launch a brand new commercial website with refreshed content which is easy to update and navigate.

The second deliverable is to provide an integrated on-line facility in order to provide a box office facility and on-line shop. However, any complications or in-house issues must not prevent or delay the main deliverable being achieved.

Project Approach

If successful, it is hoped that the website could be up and running by spring 2016.

Project Schedule

Task	Time Scale	Responsibility
Approval from Transformation Sub-committee	8th February 2016	Committee
Finalise Specification	February 2016	Martin Smith/Tracey Harding/Mark Chadwick
Seek Quotes	February 2016	Martin Smith/Tracey Harding
Liaison with IT/Web Team/Legal/Finance for transition	March 2016	Tracey Harding/Annette Wade/Mark Chadwick/Legal rep and Finance rep
Review and Award of Contract	March 2016	Martin Smith/Tracey Harding
Develop and finalise Templates/Design	End March 2016	Tracey Harding/Tourism Team/ Awarded Designer
Transfer of Data	April 2016	Tourism Team/Awarded Designer
Testing and Soft Launch of website	End of April 2016	Tourism Team/Awarded Designer
Launch of website	May 2016	Tourism Team
Monitoring and Review	Monthly comparisons	Tracey Harding

Organisation- roles and responsibilities

Tracey Harding – Project Lead
Martin Smith – Assistant Project Lead
Annette Wade – Website
Mark Chadwick – IT
Tourism Team – Uploading and updating website content
Finance – On-line Payments/integration
Legal – Procurement/Contract

Communications and engagement

This will be addressed through meetings of the Steering Group and the web designer.

Resource requirements

This is intended to be a stand alone website and therefore the website will reduce the in-house resource required by the current web team. The recruitment of a new Marketing Support Officer, as previously mentioned, will be important in order to ensure ongoing continuity.

Project costs

If estimated costs are correct then a figure within the region of £5,000 can be funded from the current Tourism Budget.

If the cost of the new website comes in over our £5,000 budget, then we will seek external opportunities to secure funding.

It is anticipated that we will bring in advertising revenue which will cover/off-set the set-up costs in Year 1 and provide a new source of income thereafter.

We also have an allowance within our budget to cover the annual hosting/support costs as this money currently pays for a third party accommodation search which will cease once the new website is up and running.

Project controls

The project's progress will be constantly reviewed and monitored by the Project Lead. Reports will be made to the Steering Group and Transformation Sub-committee but as this project is envisaged as having a short timescale reporting back may be retrospective.

Risk Management

The risks identified are:

No.	Risk and Mitigation	Impact (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Overall Exposure (Impact x Likelihood)
1	Awarded company do not deliver their promise – correct procurement processes will be followed to ensure this risk is minimal	3	1	3 x 1 = 3
2	Lack of advertising support so initial cost cannot be recouped – money already exists in budget and we will still have provided a much needed improved service which will drive business	1	2	1 x 2 = 2
3.	The on-line element cannot be incorporated into the Council's Finance System – this is not critical to the launch of the project	1	2	1 x 2 = 2
4.	We fail to recruit a Marketing Support Officer at all or in time – budget is present to pay for current staff to do additional hours	2	1	2 x 1 = 2